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"JANE EYRE."

A Play in Four Acts.

An adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's celebrated novel.

by Minon Hoffingwell.

C H A R A C T E R S.

Jane Eyre, -----An orphan.

Mrs. Reed, -----Her Aunt by marriage.

Georgiana, -----Mrs. Reed's daughter.

Adele, -----A young French girl.

Bessie, -----A maid. (Double with Adele)

The Maniac, -----

Lord Rochester, -----A cynic.

Ernest Rivers, -----A young physician.

Rev. Brocklehurst, -----A hypnotical clergyman.

John Reed, -----A libertine.

Marshall, -----Butler for the Reeds.

Capt. Theodore Grey, -----A young soldier. (Double with  
Marshall)

Richard Mason, -----From the West Indies.

James, -----A servant.

S Y N C P S I S.

Act I.

Gateshead Hall. The home of the Reeds.

Act II.

Thornfield Reception Hall. Lord Rochester's Manor House.

Act III.

The same.

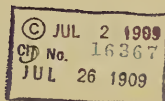
Act IV.

Scene I. Chapel in Thornfield.

Scene 2. Park and Tower of Thornfield.

Act V.

A cottage on the Rochester estate.



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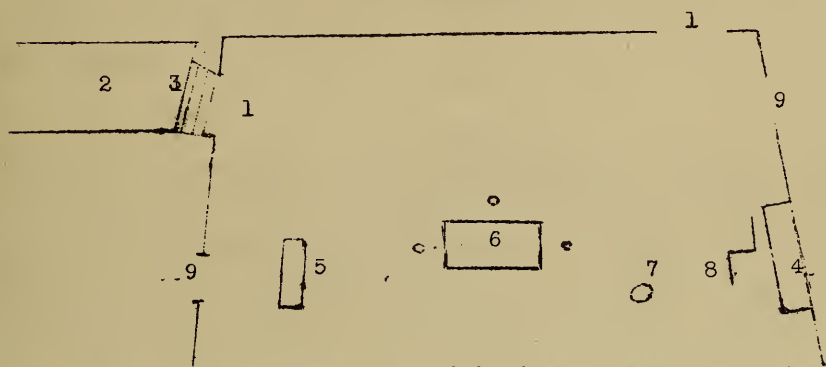


ACT I.

Scene:-

Gateshead Hall the home of the Reeds. A reception room. Scene is a well furnished interior with four openings. Set as:-

Interior Backing.



(1) Arches. (2) Platform. (3) Steps leading to platform.  
(4) Fireplace. (5) Couch. (6) Table and chairs. (7) Arm chair. (8) Screen. (9) Doors.

The arch R.U.E. is curtained, also arch L.U.E. Steps and platform about two feet high run off R.U.E. Arch L.U.E. supposed to open into breakfast room. Door in L. boxing obliqued open, used for general entrances. Door R. has practical lock and key. A fireplace down L. Fire burning, coal scuttle, tongs, shovel, poker etc. Low English fire screen. Couch down R. Large table C. with chairs surrounding it, newspapers, bottles, glasses, playing cards, etc., on table. Arm chair before fire, with footstool. Book shelves at back, oil painting or portrait of middle aged gentleman above book case.

At rise:- Music. "The Jolly Roast Beef of Old England." Bessie a trim English parlour maid is busy putting the apartment in order. She picks up the playing cards which are scattered around the floor by table, restores chairs which have been upset to normal position. Marshall a typical butler of the smirk type, middle aged, dress suit, socks and pumps, enters while Bessie is engaged at above.

Marshall

I say Bessie, did you know as how young Master John came 'ome lawst night.

Bessie

Cawn't I see it, 'aven't I heyes? Look at this letter and rubbish.

Marshall

Yes, he came from London "squiffy", with an 'orse trainer. They sat at that table and drank and drank, like two boiled owls. I 'ad to pull Master John out from under the table and carry 'im to bed.

Bessie

What did you do with the 'orse trainer? I always 'ad afancy for 'orse trainers.

1870

1870

1870

1870



Marshall

( 'Sneers) Oh, you 'ad, 'ad you? Well, I took him by the arm and showed 'im the way to the "pub." I'm taking this soda and brandy now to Master John, but oh 'es seedy this morning. The missus 'as sent for Dr. Rivers to take a look at 'im. She's real cut up about it.

Bessie

Well if I was 'er, if 'e 'cut" hup any more I'd cut too. I'd cut off 'is allowance as it is. She only cuts on the servants.

Marshall

You ought to have 'eard what Master John said when I told 'im Jane Eyre was back 'ere.

Bessie

What did 'e say?

Marshall

"What, that little 'ell cat?" That's what 'e called 'er, an 'ell cat. "Say Marshall, 'ow does she look, as hugly as hever?" And I sez, sez I, I sez, no Master John, she's vastly improved, in fact to my taste she might be called 'andsome, and 'e says, sez 'e, 'e sez, I'll take a squint at 'er to-morrow, and if she suits me I'll put her in my collection. Then 'e laughed. The 'orse trainer 'e laughed, and Because they was so familiar I forgot that I was a dignified butler and I laughed. In fact we hall of us laughed, and then they took another drink.

Bessie

I 'eard she was sent to the Charityx school. They 'ated one another.

Marshall

They did. One day 'e 'it 'er with an 'ammer. She carries the scar now, but she got at 'im and whipped 'im good. 'E was fourteen when and she was only ten, that's eight years ago.

Bessie

Well, I don't think that a man x has any right to beat a woman unless she loves 'im.

John

( Outside)(Off R. door) Marshall, Marshall.

Marshall

'Eere sir!

John

Hurry with that brandy and soda, you damned snail, my head is splitting.

Marshall

Yes sir, x yes sir! (Shambles off R. door exit) (Bessie has gathered up empty bottles and glasses, cigar stumps on tray, about to exit L. door in boxing, runs into Brocklehurst who enters)

Brocklehurst

Ahem ahem! (Pompously clearing his throat) Young woman, look o ut, look out where you are going.

Bessie

Oh hexcuse me, sir.

Brocklehurst

I will excuse you just this once, but don't let it ever occur again.

Bessie

( Dropping a courtesy) I shan't sir.



Brocklehurst

What! (Looking at Bessie's hair) Do my eyes deceive me. Why, your hair is curled. (Holds up his hands and groans in horror) vanity, wicked vanity. This is not mortification of the lusts of the flesh. A maid servant with her hair curled.

Bessie

(Timidly) It curls naturally, sir.

Brocklehurst

(Impatiently) I have nothing to do with nature. Where nature is extravagance, vain gloriousness and temptation from the paths of righteousness, nature should be curtailed. You are in danger, girl, in danger.

Bessie

I hope not, sir.

Brocklehurst.

Oh, but you are. I shall speak to your Mistress Mrs. Reed. In your inferior and servile position in life, beware the hissing whisper of the serpent in your ear.

Bessie

(Georgiana enter R.R.U.E.) (Bessie trying to edge off) I will sir, I will.

Brocklehurst

Remember what this honied venom did to Eve, then think how Adam suffered. If Eve had not listened to the serpent, there would have been no need of milliners or dressmakers, no furbelows, no frills, no hairdressers. Girl if you hope for grace, straighten out your hair, wear it plainly - modestly.

Bessie

But if I cannot make it straight, sir.

Brocklehurst

Then cut it off. Better be bald headed than a brand fit for the burning. Go! (Bessie exits) Good morning. Ah! (Turning and seeing Georgiana) My dear Miss Georgiana. If I may make so bold as to say, you are looking positively charming. That rose in your hair is so becoming to your style of beauty - your -

Georgiana

Now Brooky - Brooky - don't be a bore. I heard everything you are trying to say to me a score of times at the ball last night.

Brocklehurst

Ah, the Garrison Ball. My wife and daughter were there.

Georgiana

I believe so. I literally danced my slippers off my feet. Then Captain Grey asked me to sit out, and he said the loveliest things to me in the conservatory, and then Lord Punkhead dined by.

Brockhurst

Lord Punkhead - yes - (enraptured) I do so love a Lord, and what did Lord Punkhead say?

Georgiana

He never says much, excepting (mimicking) "Really" and "what a bawh! But he looked - and -

Brocklehurst

How did he look.

Georgiana

He looked like a calf who had chanced upon a quart of champagne and finished it.



Brocklehurst

Oh what a simile for a British peer.

Georgiana

Yes, he did try to tell a little story, a little French story, rather risque, but he dried up before he reached the point so I finished it for him. (rather risque in quality, you might say equivocal)

Brocklehurst

(Smiling and pointing his finger at her paternally) Oh fie Miss Georgiana, fie.

Georgiana

(Not heeding interruption) I tell it very well. I heard it first from your elder daughter. (Brocklehurst coughs) When I got through Lord Punkhead laughed "Ha, haw, say you're a deuced ripping girl. Haw, haw." (Marshall re-enters, ducks and dodges a book which is hurled after him, the boot hits Brocklehurst in the back. He turns and picks it up)

Brocklehurst

(To Marshall) What is the meaning of this?

Marshall

That's 'is book. Look hout, look hout, sir, 'e may throw the t'her one. (Closes the door)

Brocklehurst

He, who.

Marshall

Young Master John, sir. (Takes boot)

who

Georgiana

(To Brocklehurst, looks up inquiringly) Yes, my prodigal brother tired of London, and the husks thereof have returned.

Brocklehurst

Ah, the dear boy. Well, boys will be boys. We must be charitable toward the errors and escapades of the youth belonging to our good old substantial families. So Young Mr. John is back again, and your esteemed mother will kill the fatted calf for him eh?

Georgiana

Fatted calf. Well, the best John can expect from her this time is cold veal and very little of that. (Mrs. Reed enters L. Rivers following)

Mrs. Reed

Good morn'g Mr. Brocklehurst. You're early.

Brocklehurst

I was eager my dear madame, to obey your honored note. (to Rivers stiffly) Your servant, doctor. (Rivers bows to him coldly)

Rivers

(To Georgiana) Miss Georgiana. (Georgiana bows to him and smiles.)

Mrs. Reed

Is your young master awake Marshall.

Marshall

Oh yes ma'am, he's awake, ma'am. (Mrs. Reed goes over to door R. knocks)

John

(Outside R) Who the devil's there? If it's you Marshall, open the door, I want to hit you with the other boot.

Mrs. Reed

It is I your mother, John.





John

(Cutside) What do you want?

Mrs. Reed

I sent for Dr. Rivers. My poor boy, I want to see if he can't make you feel better. See him, won't you?

John

Trot him in. Trot the saw bones in and tell Marshall to bring me some more brandy, and some ice, if he can get any in this barbarous hole of a place. (Mrs. Reed signs to Marshall who nods understandingly and exits into breakfast room)

Mrs. Reed

(Calls after Marshall) And Marshall, serve breakfast in half an hour, You may go in, Doctor. (Rivers exits R)

Georgiana

I think I'll go and see what is in the mail bag.

Mrs. Reed

(To Brocklehurst.) You know why I sent for you?

Brocklehurst

I suspected.

Mrs. Reed

It was about Jane Eyre.

Brocklehurst

So I supposed.

Mrs. Reed

You know the trouble I had with her when a child before I placed her in your charge at Lowood School. In those days she was such a burden to be left on my hands, and so much annoyance as she caused me with her incomprehensible disposition, her sudden starts of temper, her continuous unnatural watchings of one's movements. I hated her as I would a little fiend, and now she's back again, here in my house to torture me with her presence. Why didn't she die at your charity school when the typhoid fever broke out there and destroyed so many of the pupils? No, she did not die. She will live to call back memories of the past,

Brocklehurst

Calm yourself my dear madam.

Mrs. Reed

She seems like her mother's ghost come back on earth. I can see her now with elfish eyes gazing at me. She was my husband's only sister, and when the news came of her death, he broke down and cried like a fool. He insisted on sending for the baby, Jane, a sickly, whiny, pining thing, and he pitied it, nursed it and petted it, as if it had been his own. She stood in the way of my children then, she stands in their way now.

Brocklehurst

Why how can that be, my dear madame.

Mrs. Reed

(Passionately) Oh, you would understand early enough if you knew the facts. My husband, an hour before he died bound me by oath to keep the creature. I would as soon have been charged with a pauper brat out of the work house. Yes, I hated Jane Eyre when she was a child as a compound of duplicity and virulent temper. (Jane enters R.U.E. she carries portfolio and sketching parts) You have cured her of her temper in your charity orphan school.

Brocklehurst

We certainly show the orphan girl that proper humility should be practical.





Mrs. Reed

But now that she is grown to womanhood with her meek quakerish ways and calm searching eyes which seem to read my very soul, I hate Jane Eyre more.

Jane

(Coming down) I know that, Aunt Reed, and I will soon relieve you of all sight of me. I hope this time forever.

Mrs. R & Brocklehurst

Listening, eh!

Jane

By chance and not intent. My presence under this roof is not of my own seeking. I was forced to give up my position as teacher at Lowood school. I could not remain longer.

Mrs. Reed

Why - why -

Jane

Ask him - (Pointing to Brocklehurst) Perhaps he will answer but I don't think he will.

Mrs. Reed

Do you throw out insinuations against the character of this worthy man.

Jane

If the time ever comes for me to speak I will not insinuate - I paint him in his true colors. (To Mr. Brocklehurst) You did me the service I understand, of advising my Aunt to burn up my poor little store of books.

Brocklehurst

I did. (Virtuously) It is immoral for a girl of your age, that is, an orphan girl and a dependent on the charity of your estimable Aunt, to possess the works of Shakespeare, Byron, Goldsmith, Thackeray, etc., besides it is a waste of time. It is your destiny to toil and earn your bread by the sweat of your brow, and not indulge in vanity, idle day dreams, and such golden rules as painting, drawing, music and the like.

Jane

I will not argue the ethics of the case Mr. Brocklehurst you will soon pass out of my life. I do not deplore the eight years of my girlhood spent in the semi charity institution over which you preside. The physical discomforts of cold and hunger are now but memories, the petty tyrannies, the cant, the hypocrisy, are warning beacons of sins we should avoid. The beautiful nature of my child friend, Helen Burns, and the example of Miss Temple, the noble woman, your late head teacher, both helped to mould my character. Don't fear Aunt Reed, I am no longer a misunderstood and tortured little savage, I'm really a disciplined and subdued being.

Mrs. Reed

I hope so.

Jane

I know so. My old phase of life is about closing, another vista is opening to me, a new servitude, and it is welcome, so welcome. I thank you Mrs. Reed for the shelter you have given me this week, and Uncle Reed in Heaven who loved me well approves of what you have done. I am grateful.

Mrs. Reed

Is this some of your sarcasm - because I had you eat with the servants, and because you have drudged at a sewing for the household while here?



Jane

I have ceased being a pauper for three years Mr/. Brocklehurst, since I earned my living at a small stipend as under teacher in your school. What money my Aunt has expended on me, should I live, will be refunded to the last farthing. I received a letter this morning offering me a position of governess in Milcote in this same Shire. Dr. Rivers helped me to procure it. I leave to-day.

Brocklehurst

Without your Aunt's permission, your Aunt, who is your legal guardian.

Mrs. Reed

Let her depart. I shall be glad to. Come, let us go in to breakfast, Mr. Brocklehurst. (Exit into L.U.E.)

Brocklehurst

(Watches her off) (Steals over to Jane) Don't repeat any tales about me. Don't for if you do, I'll - I'll -

Jane

(Calmly) You'll what?

Brocklehurst

I'll denounce them as falsehoods. (Seeing Rivers who re-enters R. and all liars will have their portion in the lake burning with fire and brimstone.

Jane

What an awful fortune you are laying up for yourself. (Brocklehurst speechless with indignation, exits L.U.E.)

Rivers

How repellant is this man, his hypocrisy disgusts me.

Jane

And his assumption of piety is so transparent and so shallow, a child might see through him. A strange compound of ignorance, pomposity and fawning cunning. If he were not so loathesome, he might be laughable.

Rivers

It is men of his class who are the worst enemies a true religion can encounter. The half formed soul groping for the truth seeing a grewsome spectre like Brocklehurst in its path will turn aside and drift into infidelity. He hates both you and me, Jane. I always feel like kicking him.

Jane

It is not violence that best overcomes hate, nor vengeance that most certainly heals injury.

Rivers

Ah, you say that Jane, but I can see a latent gleam in your eyes which belies your entire trust in what you say.

Jane

Perhaps I am still wretchedly defective, I fear I am -

Rivers

No, little woman, you are as good as gold. But tell me, you really have the place as governess at Thornfield.

Jane

Yes, my dear friend, through your kind recommendation I am going there this morning. Believe me, I am grateful.

Rivers

Don't speak of it, Jane.

Jane

Oh but I must.



Rivers

Do you remember when we first met Jane?

Jane

As it were yesterday. When the cradle of fog bred pestilence with the quickening spring breathed typhus through the crowded orphan asylum at Lowood semi, starvation and neglected colds helped along infection, and forty-five out of the eighty girls lay ill at one time. Death was a frequent visitor. I used to watch you toiling and battling to drive out the dreaded scourge, and one day, I spoke to you half fearing a rebuff. You looked so grave, haggard, with strenuous days and toiling nights, but you smiled, and said, "what is it little woman."

Rivers

Yes, Jane, you have always been "little woman" with me. (Pause, Jane silent) Well, you said "please sir, Mr. Doctor, I want to help you. I want to be of some use." Then I said in my best professional manner, something like Brocklehurst.

Jane

Horrors, nothing like high. You said simply, "Little woman, go and play in the woods like a gypsy from morning till night, then you won't get the fever."

Rivers

And then you said "Please sir, I want to nurse Helen Burns, she's been awful good to me. She hasn't the fever, sir, but consumption. You have so much to do with saving the others sir, tell me what to do and let me nurse her." And I consented. Jane you were a faithful little nurse to the end. I'll never forget how Miss Temple and I found you the dawn of one morning, lying in a little crib by the sick girl's bed, your face against Helen Burns' shoulder, your arms around her neck, you were asleep, and Helen was - dead. (Pause) (Marshall enters L. carrying a decanter and bowl of ice, goes R.) (Rivers stops him) Wait a moment! Don't take that in there. Your young master is my patient now. Take this away. (Pointing to decanter) Bring a bottle of plain soda instead. You may leave the ice.

Marshall

Yes sir. (Leaves bowl on table) (Exits with decanter)

Rivers

He is drunk now, no need of making matters worse.

Jane

I hope to get away before he sees me.

Rivers

You can't get over your childhood repugnance.

Jane

Sincerely, I can't, that's why I am hastening to get to Thornfield. John Reed has always been an ogre to my fancy.

Rivers

I hope you won't think the same thing of Lord Rochester, Jane.

Jane

Lord Rochester?

Rivers

Your new Master did not know who you were going to work for.

Jane

A Miss Fairfax.

Rivers

She is the house-keeper, a worthy woman, and your pupil is a young French girl nearly as old as yourself. She's a charming child - you will like her.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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Jane

What sort of a man is Lord Rochester.

Rivers

An enigma to the world, generally, a few admirers, a host of enemies, some friends, no intimates, a scholar, a cynic, but I believe always a gentleman. I am anxious to learn how you will get a long together.

Jane

He will probably be unconscious of my very existence.

Rivers

Have you ordered a fly to take you to the station?

Jane

(And outside) Yes, my box is corded and I am ready to go now.

Rivers

I'll go and see if the conveyance is waiting while you make yourself adieux. (Exit L. door on side)

Jane

Ought I not be grateful! Heaven has sent me these changes. My long years of suffering are all forgotten now in this one glad moment of anticipation. The rocky barriers which hemmed me in are rent, and the world, the bright the glorious world, it's doors are opened to me at last. It seems as if I were entering a dream, a beautiful dream. (To back, looks at picture) Uncle, dear Uncle Reed, my mother, my brother, may your blessings from Heaven fall on the orphan whom you so cherished and guide her through the great unknown into which she is drifting. (Wipes her eyes)

Georgiana

(Re-enters) (Picks up Jane's bonnet which she has left on chair, examines it contemptibly with a side glance at Jane, crosses stage to R.U.)

Jane

I am going away this morning Georgiana, and probably may never see you again.

Georgiana

No. (Indifferently, yawning)

Jane

I thought I would like to say good-bye. (Holding out her hand)

Georgiana

(Ignoring her proffered hand) All right. (Flippantly and turns away)

John

Marshall! (Enter R. door) Marshall you damned old sneak, what have you done with my other boot. (John is completely dressed in riding costume, lacking the one boot. (Hat on, riding crop and all. He is red faced and slightly drunk) Hello Georgie. (Limps to her) Where's my boot. Come kiss your brother.

Georgiana

Not I. You reek of the stable. Keep away from me. (Pushes him off)

John

Well, where's that damned Marshall. He didn't bring me the brandy and he's got my other boot. Damn him.

Georgiana

Keep your oath for your chosen circle of racine touts, stablemen and swell mobsmen.





-ll-P.

John

My friends are just as good as yours, and my language is just as refined. I know all about your set with your cigarettes in public and cocktails in tea cups, your dowager cats, your spinster tabbies, and your debutante purries. You all belong to the whole damn cat family. stables, eh! What do you say to that?

Georgiana

Say, I say you'd better go to bed and sleep it off, or better still - here's your boot - (picks it up and throws it at his head) go mount your horse and ride to the devil, and rid mother and me of a nuisance.

John

Thanks, oh thanks, dear sister, I'll ride out to the "pub" and see a friend of mine from London. (Pulling on boot, sits on couch)

Georgiana

I hope you'll break your neck before you get there. (Exit P.R.U.E. (Marshall enters))

John

Oh here you are. Where's that brandy? (Goes to table C. rapping on it with riding ~~xx~~ crop)

Marshall

Please sir, Dr. Rivers said as how you were to 'ave this him - stead. (Places soda bottle on table)

John

(Grabbing the bottle and aiming a blow at Marshall who dodges him) What the devil has Dr. Rivers got to do with what I eat or drink. (Sees Jane who has retired down L.) Hello, what's that?

Marshall

Why, she's her, sir.

John

Oh, she's her, is she? And who may her be?

Marshall

Jane Eyre, sir.

John

Jane Eyre? What, the imp that went to the charity school? Say (coarsely) Turn around here and let's see how you size up? (Jane turns and looks him squarely in the eye) Why you haven't turned out such a bad looking filly after all. Do you know who I am?

Jane

I do.

John

Then I don't have to be introduced, do I?

Jane

No.

John

(To Marshall) Say Marshall, get out, you're in the way. (Marshall grins, exits L.U.E.) (To Jane who is about to follow) Stop where are you going?

Jane

To bid your mother good-bye.

John

Are you going away? Where?

Jane

To a place a few miles away from here.

John

To do what?

1900  
The first of the year was a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 10% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1901  
The second year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 15% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1902  
The third year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 20% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1903  
The fourth year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 25% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1904  
The fifth year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 30% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1905  
The sixth year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 35% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1906  
The seventh year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 40% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1907  
The eighth year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 45% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1908  
The ninth year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 50% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1909  
The tenth year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 55% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1910  
The eleventh year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 60% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

1911  
The twelfth year was also a very successful one for the  
company. The sales were up 65% from the previous year.  
The new product line was well received by the market.  
The company is looking forward to a bright future.

Jane

To work.

John

To work? I know lots of girls no better looking than you who don't have to work.

Jane

They are fortunate perhaps.

John

No! (Leering) The world calls them unfortunate, ha, ha, ha. (Laughs coarsely) Say, come over here and sit beside me.

Jane

No.

John

But I want to talk to you.

Jane

I haven't time.

John

Then make time. Oh no I am not going to let you go until I've had my say. (Runs after her, grabs her arm, brings her down the stage.)

Jane

John Reed, let go of my arm. (Shakes him off)

John

O oo. What a high spirited, nettlesome little filly it is, just my style. Say, aren't you afraid of me?

Jane

(Looks at him) Not the least little bit. (Pause)

John

I want to come to an understanding with you. Mother's brought me down here to lead a simple life, and it's going to be awful dull. Now I want somebody to amuse me. The farmer girls around here don't appeal to my city taste at all. You see, how you and I can be pretty good friends. Oh, don't look so innocent, you know

what I mean, and when I can get some more money out of the Mater, you and I can go up to London. What do you say?

Jane

This, John Reed. I hated you when you were a boy. I despise you now that you are called a man. The smiling, cowardly bully has grown into the selfish besotted libertine, a disgrace to the name which your good father bore - a living reproach to your indulgent mother, a libel on the name of man.

John

Why, you miserable little pauper - do you dare -

Jane

Yes, I dare. You can't frighten me now, John Reed, as you did when you were a great husking lad and I a little child. That time is past. I am a pauper as far as the world's goods go, but I am rich in honest purpose and purity of heart, which you have never known and will never know.

John

I've met your kind before, and I've broken them in. Do you want me to make you the talk of the household before you leave, and scorn of the whole village?

Jane

I defy you.

John

We'll see. (Seizes her, trying to kiss her)



Jane

Let me go you drunken beast. (They struggle over by the table, she breaks away, she grabs up hunting crop which lies on the table, strikes him over the head with it, beating him into insensibility, saying) You beast - you beast! (John falls down R) (Cmnes enter, Mrs. Reed and Brocklehurst from L.U.E. Marshall ~~from~~ behind door with Bessie, Rivers from left side, Georgiana down from R.U.E.) (Murmurs of astonishment)

Mrs. Reed

What has happened? What does this mean? (Crosses down to C. to John)

Jane

Mrs. Reed, it means that your son has insulted me. He proposed, under his mother's roof that I, the orphan dependent, should become his mistress, and I have punished him as he deserved.

Mrs. Reed

She has murdered my poor boy, send for the Police!

Rivers

Take my advice and do nothing of the kind, unless you wish to see your son in jail. Jane Eyre is now altogether friendless here, for I'll stand by her to the end. Come Jane, the driver awaits to take you to your new home. (Gathers up portfolio and Jane's gloves, etc.)

Mrs. Reed

Jane Eyre, you shall suffer yet for all the worry you have caused me. (Music plaintive)

Jane

Mrs. Reed, whatever trouble I've caused, I repent, and in your last hour when the bitter tears of repentance flow from your eyes for the cruelties you have practiced on the orphan girl, when the dead sea fruit you have so carefully garnered, turns to ashes, my prayers shall join with yours to Heaven's high seat, that God will grant your unhappy soul forgiveness. (Music swells) (Starts for door L.) (Picture)

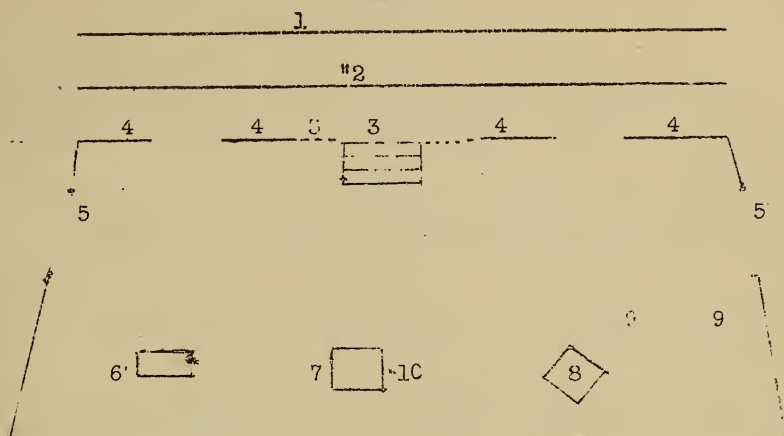
C U R T A I N  
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Scene:-

One year later. Reception Hall at Thornfield Tower.



(1) Palace drop for backing. (2) Platform in front of same, about four feet high. (3) Steps down from same, C. (4) Palace arches in front of platform with masking pieces. (5) Arch in L. Door R. (6) Sofa R. of C. (8) Arm chair. Ottoman. (7) Large table and chairs C. (9) Medallion. (10) Candelabra with candles lighted on table C.

Note:- Arch L. curtained. All the bric-a-brac and decorative pieces obtainable to richly furnish the scene.

At rise:- Enter Jane and Rivers from L. arch)

Rivers

Then your life now, Jane, is a happy one?

Jane

Yes, the happiest I have known, since early childhood, since my Uncle died. Adele, my charge, has made reasonable progress. I have oceans of time to indulge in my own weird fancies and fads, and although the restlessness of my nature makes me curious, sometimes, to behold the wonders of the world of which I am ignorant, still, ~~th~~ I then seek refuge in my books. Lord Rochester's library is well stocked, and I am content again.

Rivers

And Lord Rochester.

Jane

He comes and goes. I was five months here before I ever saw him, and then our meeting was a most peculiar one.

Rivers

How was that?

Jane

We met in Hay Lane. He claims that the sight of my figure clad in gray and seated on the stile, frightened his horse and gave him a bad fall. Since then he calls me his "Little Elf" - insists I am a witch, etc.





Rivers

He is a peculiar man as I told you.

Jane

Very abrupt, yet kind - sardonic yet exhibiting at times, a general courtesy which wins one to admiration. He sends for me nearly every evening when he is home.

Rivers

Have you heard he is likely to be married soon?

Jane

(Pauses) Yes. Adele prattles in her way and tells me if I will listen, what gossip she hears from her French attendant Sophie, who in turn devours all the gossip of the Servant's hall.

Rivers

You might be surprised to learn that the lady he will marry is your cousin Georgiana. She and her mother Mrs. Reed are among the guests who come here to-day. I tell you this to put you on your guard.

Jane

I shall not have to meet them. (Musing) Georgiana! He marry Georgiana?

~~Exit~~ Adele

(Enters L.) Ah, Mademoiselle, dis lettre - read! Read:- "Mr. Cadeau, pour Mademoiselle Jeannette." Et is in your room. Allez. Allez! Ah! Monsieur Riviere!

Jane

A present for me. (Takes note, reads) "And furthermore, I want Miss Eyre, Her Elfship to be presentable. I have sent her the new dress by bearer. Signed Rochester." Be presentable! I shall not be present, and his gift shall be wasted.

Adele

Ah, Mademoiselle, Monsieur Edward de Fairfax Rochester will be "angubre" eef you do not change your toilette.

Jane

You born Parisienne you think too much of toilette. Go into the conservatory and take some of the roses and complete your own, and take the doctor with you.

Adele

O ui, oui! Come doctaire. (Running off R.U.E.)

Rivers

One moment, Jane, you spoke this evening of this mysterious woman Grace Poole!

Jane

Yes, I cannot make her out. She seems to possess some sort of power around the household. There is a strange laugh that comes from her room at times. She comes and goes as she likes, snubs the other servants, and -

Rivers

Pay no attention to her Jane. She is simply a "favored" servant. I cannot say more, as -

Adele

(Calls off) Doctaire!

Jane

Go to her. (Exit Rivers) (Solus) So the Reeds are coming into my life again. I thought I had lost them forever.

Rochester

(Enters L) What the devil! Nobody to be found. (Sees Jane) Ah, good evening Miss Eyre.

Jane

Good evening, my Lord.



Rochester

Are you about to run away from me again?

Jane

It didn't occur to me that I was running away, my Lord.

Rochester

Very well then, remain. I wanted to say something to you. I have almost forgotten you of late. (Suddenly) Why haven't you put on your new dress?

Jane

Because I cannot forget my position. I am sensible of your kindness, but without imposing on it, I could find means to make myself presentable.

Rochester

Ah, then you read my note to Adele?

Jane

Yes, my Lord, at her request.

Rochester

You are annoyed because I am not pleased with your plain attire?

Jane

No, not at all.

Rochester

(Muffled) Don't contradict me. You are - you know you are. In this old gloomy place the eye finds relief by looking on bright lively colors, but you, you are too proud and independent to accept presents.

Jane

My Lord, I -

Rochester

Oh, I understand your character. Little conversation as I have had with you, with all your meekness and simplicity, you have your own ideas of things. You dislike my manner, you think me too dictatorial, too abrupt. I suppose I am. (Jane smiles) What is the meaning of that smile?

Jane

I was thinking, my Lord, that very few masters would care whether or not they pleased their paid subordinates.

Rochester

Paid subordinates? Oh yes, I had forgotten the salary. Humph! Well, on that mercenary ground, will you consent in the future to dispense with a great many conventional forms and phrases without thinking me insolent?

Jane

I am sure, sir, I could never mistake informality for insolence - the one I rather like, the other - nothing free-born would submit to, even for a salary.

Rochester

Humph! Most things free born will consent to anything for a salary. If you are different from others, it is no fault of yours. Nature cast you in a different mould, but to return - you are Adele's governess. What relation do you think exists between her and me?

Jane

I think whatever the relation is, it doesn't concern me.

Rochester

It does concern you. You have a right to know whose child you are educating. You think Adele is my child. She is not. She is



- 4-P.

an unfortunate orphan, but I find it my duty to provide for her care and education.

Jane

Your kindness to one who is not your child should be extolled.

Rochester

Bah! No matter about that now. Adele was not born out of wedlock. No matter what the world thinks, her mother was a French C opera dancer, towards whom I once cherished a "grande Passion." Her husband and she had separated years before. Celine Vareus was a fickle little butterfly and ran away from me when she termed "Anglais horrible" as she had from most others in her variegated career, but the last "Ami precieuy" avenged all the others. He ran away from Celine leaving her destitute, to die in poverty and despair. She bequeathed Adele to me three years ago. Adele was helpless and alone, that's all. Why, you are crying. Yes you are, don't deny it.

Jane

I don't deny it. Poor orphaned Adele, I too, my Lord, am fatherless, motherless and alone. I have learned to love her already, and your confidence to me regarding her condition makes a new bond between us.

Rochester

You are a noble girl, Miss Eyre, and I want you to promise me to remain here until I send you away.

Jane

Most willingly.

Rochester

And now as a further proof of your love for Adele, and as a favor, a particular and esteemed favor to me, oblige me by putting on the new dress. (Cracking of whips heard and hoofs and noise of carriage) Quick, my guests are coming. Stand not to question, "but settle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next, etc. to go to your room and do as I say or I will drag you on a hurdle thither."

Jane

I will look like an ape in a harlequin's jacket.

Rochester

You will look like nothing of the kind. My taste is excellent in ladies' gowns. You will gratify Adele and please me. (Putting Jane off R)

Jane

You say that like Jupiter omnipotent. (Exits R)

Rochester

(Solus) I find in this little elf, this stranger, the good and bright qualities I have sought for ten years, and never before encountered. Her society revives, regenerates one. (Voice outside L) (Georgiana, Mrs. Reed, Theodore, all laughing and talking) But I am forgetting my duties as host. (All enter) Ladies, you are outspeeding my expectations. You are heartily welcome, including my brave Captain of whom I must confess a fair amount of jealousy. But a cloud hovers over the brow of the fair Amazon. (Takes Georgiana's hand) I hope it doesn't threaten me.

Georgiana

Never thee, thou re-incarnation of all that was fierce in the middle ages. You should have lived then.





Theodore

Do you mean his Lordship is out of date?

Georgiana

I mean I am sick of the young men of the present day.

Theodore

Thanks! Awfully!

Georgiana

Give me a man with blood in his veins. Timour the Tartar for example.

Theodore

He was a lame ugly brute, so I've always understood.

Georgiana

What of that? Beauty is the special prerogative of woman.

Rochester

Of which Miss Georgiana far exceeds her fair portion. (Georgiana smiles)

Theodore

And then Timour had forty-six wives.

Rochester

Don't let us go into the gentleman's domestic infelicities.

Theodore

Yes, his whole life was spent in war. Forty-six wives! No peace at home or abroad.

Theodore

(Enter Doctor Rivers and Adele) Ah, we come, Doctor! This is an unexpected pleasure. (to others) You all know the doctor?

Theodore

Ah yes, we all know the doctor. We're all his patients. Miss Georgiana here, he treats for her heart.

Omnes

Her heart?

Georgiana

My heart?

Rochester

What is the matter with her heart?

Theodore

It is petrifying.

Georgiana

Monster! (Sighs and looks at Rochester)

Theodore

(Looking at Mrs. Reed who is glaring at him) Mrs. Reed here, he treats for -

Mrs. Reed

Well, what does he treat me for? Go on, out with it.

Theodore

(Calmly surveying her through monocle) Your liver.

Mrs. Reed

(Angrily) Monkey!

Theodore

No, your liver!

Georgiana

Captain, then among us all yours is the only hopeless case.

Theodore

How do you make that out?

Georgiana

The doctor is treating you for your brain. (Omnes laugh)





Theodore

I'll promise to be good, but your lordship has forgotten- (Looking at Adele)

Rochester

True! This young lady is my ward, Mademoiselle Adele. (Adele courtesies to all) (Turns suddenly)

Adele

I return a thousand thanks for your generosity. Does my gown not become me? (To Rochester), Monsieur, je vous remercie Mille fois de votre bonte! Est ce que ma robe va bien?

Rochester

Cui! Cui! Ma Petite!

Mrs. Reed

(Aside) His child by one of his French mistresses no doubt.

Georgiana

I don't know but I'll find out. (Rochester playfully kisses Adele, and passes her over to Theodore who appears anxious to meet her) (Georgiana drawshim away from them) (Rivers comes at back behind, joins Mrs. Reed who is seated in arm chair L.)

Georgiana

(To Rochester) Where did you pick her up?

Rochester

I didn't pick her up. She was left on my hands.

Georgiana

You should have sent her to school.

Rochester

I can't afford it. Schools are so dear, besides, I am having her educated here.

Georgiana

Oh then she has a governess?

Rochester

A deed she has. A governess, and as the little French doll is quite a young lady now, a companion.

Georgiana

I never could abide governesses. Half of them are detestable, the other half ridiculous.

Rochester

This one is neither.

mGeorgiana

Oh, a paragon. She must be a jewel.

Rochester

Yes "of purest say serena.

Georgiana

I should like to examine her.

Rochester

You shall have that pleasure, she will be here presently.

Georgiana

Really? (Sneeringly)

Rochester

Really and truly, but let me warn you in advance. When you examine, don't forget that she herself carries a powerful magnifying glass. She has used it on me. She may on you. (

(They continue conversation in dumb show)

Theodore

(To Adele) And then you do speak English?

Adele

Oh Cui! Cui! I spik ze Anglais, not so good as wef I was here born, what you call it, "nateef?" ml speak ze Anglais only as



what you say, big bit better zan you can speak ze Francais.  
Theodore

That was a facer. Well then, we ought to get on well together.  
You teach me better French and I'll try to polish off your English  
Adele

C h non, non, Mademoiselle eit ma gouvernante - she teach me.  
(They talk animatedly in dumb show)

Mrs. Reed

Yes Doctor, I'm sadly worried over my poor dear boy. I commissi-  
i oned that truly good man Mr. Brocklehurst to go to London  
and reason with him, but I fear it will be of little use. I  
thought he would have returned before this. I left word at  
Gateshead Hall that he should follow us here. (James, the  
servant enters L.)

James

If it please your Lordship, there is a gentleman below who  
wishes to see Mrs. Reed at once.

Mrs. Reed

I must be he. (To James) A clerical gentleman?

James

Yes Madam.

Mrs. Reed

It is the Rev. Mr. Brocklehurst, your Lordship. He brings me  
news from London, from my son.

Rochester

Show the gentleman in. (James exits L) (All look expectantly)  
(Pause) (Brocklehurst enters solemnly)

Brocklehurst

Your Lordship! Ladies! Gentlemen! (Bows all round)

Theodore

Hello Brocky, old chap!

Brocklehurst

(Gives him withering look) (To Mrs. Reed) Mrs. Reed!

Mrs. Reed

My dear friend, you have news of my poor darling John?

Brocklehurst

I have. Providence made me the humble instrument to try and  
bring him back to you and the right path; your pet lamb who has  
wandered far from the fold.

Mrs. Reed

Did you succeed?

Brocklehurst

I did not. I reasoned with him - he replied with worldly jest.  
I told him that after you, I was his best friend. He said he'd  
make me prove it.

Georgiana

And did he make ~~me~~ you prove it?

Brocklehurst

Yes. He borrowed five pounds. Then finding prayers were wasted,  
I threatened him.

Georgiana

You threatened? What happened when?

Brocklehurst

My clerical and personal dignity received a violent shock.

Omnes

How?



-8-P.

Brocklehurst

He kicked me down stairs. (Groans) Mrs. Reed, I have suffered much ~~humility~~ but humility is the first of virtues and I am humble. (Groans)

Mrs. Reed

I cannot understand it. John has always had such an angelic disposition, but I have felt all day that I should have a disagreeable shock. (Jane enters from R. comes down C)

Rochester

(Seeing her) Ah, Miss Jane Eyre, Adele's governess and companion, my friends.

Georgiana

Ah!

Mrs. Reed & Brocklehurst

Jane Eyre!

Mrs. Reed

Jane Eyre! I knew it!

Rochester

Miss Eyre has been at Thornfield a year now.

Mrs. Reed

(Trying to control herself) Indeed, and what does Miss - Miss - teach her pupil?

Rochester

The modern languages; music, everything necessary to complete a liberal education. This young lady paints too, and better than many drawing masters.

Georgiana

Is it possible? "Praise from Sir Hubert is praise indeed."

Mrs. Reed

Miss - Miss - oh dear, I never could remember names. Where did you acquire your many accomplishments?

Jane

At Lowood school, madam.

Mrs. Reed

I was not aware that the ornamental branches were taught in an orphan asylum.

Jane

I assure you - Mrs - Mrs - oh dear, I never could remember names. Your Lordship - (Inquiringly to Rochester)

Rochester

Mrs. Reed, Jane.

Jane

Thank you. I assure you Mrs. Reed, I learned what little I know at Lowood School, and I shall be forever grateful to those who placed the chance within my reach. They bestowed a blessing without intending it.

Mrs. Reed

(In rage) The little vampire.

Rochester

Where is your portfolio, Jane. I would like to show the ladies some of your work?

Jane

It is in your study - my Lord.

Rochester

Go and fetch it.





Mrs. Reed

Pardon your Lordship, but the journey has so fatigued, if you don't mind Georgiana and I will retire to our rooms.

Rochester

What, aren't you going to have some supper? The cloth is laid in the dining room.

Mrs. Reed

No, the news of my poor boy has so unnerved me, I couldn't eat.

Rochester

Your maids will attend you. Mrs. Fairfax the housekeeper will show you your rooms. Good night, I trust you will rest well in this old house and you will be awakened by no ghost.

Mrs. Reed

Good night. Your Lordship and gentlemen! Mr. Brocklehurst, I shall see you in the morning. Come Georgiana. (Exits L.)

Rochester

(To Georgiana) Beautiful Juno, good night. Pleasant be thy dreams. (Georgiana laughs, holds out her hand. Rochester kisses it) (She kisses her finger tips to Theodore and exits L.)

Jane

Your Lordship may I retire?

Rochester

Yes. Take Adele with you, but stay, tell me before you go what think you of the fair Georgiana?

Jane

What do I think?

Rochester

Does she please you?

Jane

What would you have me say?

Rochester

She's a magnificent looking creature, is she not? I want to get her opinion of your drawings to-morrow. Good night.

Jane

Good night, my Lord, good night Doctor, good night, sir.

(Theodore bows) Come Adele. (Exits R.U.E.)

Adele

Bon nuit. Monsieur! (To Rochester) (To the others) Messieurs! (Exits R.U.E.)

Rochester

Well doctor, any new developments?

Rivers

None!

Rochester

Condition unchanged?

Rivers

Absolutely. I will be over next week. (Aside) Say award to Grace Poole. She's taking too much gin and water lately. Nothing can match the vicious and murderous cunning of a disordered mind. Have a care. (Aloud) I will bid your Lordship, good night. Good night Captain. (To Brocklehurst) Mr. Brocklehurst, I'll give you a lift in my gig over to town, if you are going there to-night.

Brocklehurst

Thank you, Doctor. I have something to say to his Lordship first. Wait for me below. (Rivers bows and exits) Your Lordship, I visited you to-night as well as Mrs. Reed!





Rochester

And to what am I indebted for the honor of this visit, my worthy friend?

Brocklehurst

Ah, your honored Lordship, outside of my sad mission to Mrs. Reed, I had a two fold object in wishing to see you.

Rochester

Two fold? That sounds ominous. Very suggestive of a double subscription for your charity school.

Brocklehurst

Double? Ah, your Lordship, your ordinary subscription will suffice this time.

Rochester

I am glad of that. You might be disappointed if you expected to get more.

Brocklehurst

The generosity of your Lordship is a proverb with the board of managers of Lowood, but to the point, I want to talk to you about a viper.

Rochester

A what?

Brocklehurst

A viper!

Rochester

Oh, a snake. Well, that is not a particularly pleasant topic of conversation, eh Captain?

Theodore

Snakes! I never liked the "uffers" ugly slimy beasts. They always remind me of some men. (Pointed y at Brocklehurst)

Brocklehurst

You are nourishing one in your bosom now, your Lordship.

Rochester

The deuce I am.

Brocklehurst

Yes, a female viper.

Rochester

The sex doesn't interest me in the slightest.

Brocklehurst

I can see her there now, stinging your Lordship.

Rochester

Can you? By the way, what are you drinking now?

Brocklehurst

Only light times.

Brocklehurst

Only light times.

Rochester

I'm glad of that. If you were addicted to strong liquor instead of a "little lady viper" in my bosom, you might discover an immense bo-constrictor.

Brocklehurst

I never jest, your Lordship.

Rochester

No, you don't look like a humorist.

Brocklehurst

This serpent that I speak of possesses the ordinary form of womanhood. God has graciously given her the shape that he has given both your Lordship and me.



-11-P.

Rochester

She must be a beauty.

Brocklehurst

No signal defect points her out as a marked character, but the Evil one in her has found a servant. She is in your service?

Rochester

The evil one's servant, in my service? Am I the "evil one" referred to? I say, don't you thank you --

Brocklehurst

Oh, this is sad. A most melancholy occasion. It is my duty to warn you. The girl, worse than the heathen who kneels to Brahma and says prayers under Juggernaut, is a liar.

Rochester

"All men are liars" says the prophet. Why not a few girls?

Brocklehurst

I learned this from the pious and charitable lady who adopted her in her orphan state, and reared her as her own daughter.

Theodore

I say "Brocky" what an infernally damned old hypocrite you are.

Brocklehurst

Sir, I am not addressing my remarks to you.

Theodore

No, but I'm addressing ~~my~~ mine to you.

Rochester

Captain, remember this worthy man's cloth.

Brocklehurst

Yes, remember my cloth.

Rochester

And let us see how he finishes.

Theodore

I would like to see his finish.

Brocklehurst

Oh, irreverent ribald! (Groans) Your Lordship! I shall complete the information I am giving you, in private.

Rochester

Yes, I think you'd better.

Brocklehurst

I shall then mention the woman's name.

Rochester

The name of the "orphan" snake! Never! I don't want to hear it. I refuse absolutely. Our interview is at an end, for the present. (Thunder) There is a storm coming up.

Brocklehurst

I shall visit your Lordship to-morrow and receive the check.

Theodore

Haven't you had "check" enough to-night?

Brocklehurst

And then, perhaps you may listen. We may not be interrupted by rude ribaldry and ruffianly remarks.

Theodore

Pooh, pooh, for you, Brocky. (Brocklehurst with exclamations of rage, stalks off L. exits.)

Theodore

Well, of all the -- whom does he mean?

Rochester

I shrewdly suspect I know, but you would have no interest in her identity.



Theodore

Why it's enough for me, that he's talking about a woman. I'm glad that young blackguard Reed kicked him in London. He ought to be kicked all over the United Kingdom. I'd like asling at the old "rotter" myself.

Rochester

Thank God he is an exception to his cloth. Well Gray, do you feel like that? I do. (Rings bell) We have an early rise if we're going after the birds. (To James who enters L) Show Captain Grey his rooms. Good night old fellow. (Thunder and lightning)

Theodore

Good night. (Yawns, follows James off L.)

Rochester

(Solus) Dr. Rivers' words alarm me a little. Grace Poole must take better care of her charge. I shall speak to her in the morning. Must Thornfield Hall always seem an abhorred spot with me? It must while that fury is confined up-stairs, and yet the mystery on the occasion of my horse Messour's accident when that -- that quiet little figure Jane gave me help, when I first saw her and placing my hand on her frail shoulder limped to the horse, something new, a fresh sap and sense stole into my frame. I want to be near her now. Is she to be the arbitress of my future for good or evil? Ah, nose sabe - sabe - dios. God knows. God knows. (Bus) (While he is speaking foregoing speech, he puts out candle after candle in the candelabra. Exits R.2.E. leaving but one lighted) (Noise of storm continues) (Pause)

Jane

(Enters cautiously) Thank Heaven no one saw me. I cannot sleep till I have rescued my portfolio. It is in ~~his~~ the study. I will ask him for it if he is there - shall take it myself if he has retired. Her eyes shall not rest on my treasures. Her lips shall not curl with disdain at the products of my lonely hours at Lowood. (Crazy woman laughs outside) Why, what is that? The demoniac laugh, I have heard before so many times. (Turns blows out the candle, giving audience impression that the draft has extinguished it) There, my candle has gone out. I will re-light it. (About to do so, crazy woman laughs again) That woman's laugh again. It must be Grace Poole who always inspires me with terror. I dare not meet her, the thought makes my blood run cold. (Laugh heard again nearer) She is coming this way. (Blows out remaining candle) I will hide myself here. (Goes off L.) (Stage almost dark, only lighted now and then by lightning flashes) (Music hurry P) (Laugh heard again) (Crazy woman enters R.U.E. with candle, melodramatic business, then exits R.U.E.) (Thunder and lightning kept up louder) (Music forte) (Pause) (Crazy woman re-enters, laughs, business, exits) (Pause)

Jane

(Enters) What mystery is this? I could ill distinguish the figure, it seemed not like hers, but that was Grace Poole's laugh. Now to get the portfolio and return to my room. It's all still now. I can find my way in the dark. Why, what is this - smoke, and screams. I can see the red glare of fire through Lord Rochester's door. My Lord, awake! Awake! Lord Rochester! Lord Rochester! (Exits R.2.E.) (Music)

Rochester

(Red fire lighted) (After pause, outside) What the devil are you





trying to do? You witch - you sorceress! Burn me to death and drown me! Stop dosing me with that water. Damn it, stop!  
{Enters apparently drenched, effect can be produced by varnishing an old coat}

Jane

{Following him} The fire is out.

Rochester

Is it? Get a match from that stand there.

Jane

Yes.

Rochester

And let's have a little light on this affair.

Jane

{Lights candle in candelabra} There has been a plot to burn you in your bed. I emptied the water picher on you.

Rochester

I can feel you did. Ugh. {Shivers} Now your Elfship, elucidate I throw myself on my couch without undressing and was dozing over a French novel. I suppose the wind blew the curtain against the candle.

Jane

No, the candle stood at the head of the bed, the curtains at the foot were in flames. Some criminal tried to destroy you.

Rochester

Nonsense!

Jane

I saw her?

Rochester

You - saw - her?

Jane

Only imperfectly - the light was bad.

Rochester

{With a sigh of relief} Ah Jane, my guests must not know a word of this. I must go to the upper story.

Jane

You will not trust this Grace Poole any more?

Rochester

Grace Poole!

Jane

Yes, she who tried to murder you. I could not see her face, but I heard her laugh.

Rochester

Her laugh! Well, I shall attend to her case to-morrow. Good-night Jane.

Jane

Good night my Lord.

Rochester

Aren't you going to give me your hand after having saved my life? {Jane does so} Stay, to know that you are safe, Jane, I am going to see you to your room and hear you lock the door. {About to put his arm around her} Come, we'll go together, my child, you're not afraid of me, are you?

Jane

Not at all, but I cannot forget that you are Lord Rochester, the master - I am Miss Eyre, the governess. Our stations are far apart. The laws of society demand that I respect you. The laws of conscience demand I respect myself. My Lord, I'll go alone. Good-night. {Music as she goes up stage}

C U R T A I N.



ACT III.

Scene:—

Same as Act II. Reception Hall at Thornfield, a year later.

At rise:— James enters, ushering on Brocklehurst.

James

I will tell Mrs. Reed you are here, sir. (Exit L.)

Brocklehurst

I wonder if they will ask me to stay to dinner? I am very hungry and the dinners are good at Thornfield. I wish I could discover the identity of the mysterious person who is confined upstairs. (Theodore and Adele cough outside R) There's that insufferable Captain and the French girl. They seem to be enjoying themselves. I hate to see people enjoy themselves. They're going to be married. They are two frivolous children of the devil, and they will be well matched.

Mrs. Reed

(Enters L.) Mr. Brocklehurst! What news of John, my boy, and is it good news?

Brocklehurst

That depends upon the point of view, my dear Madam.

Mrs. Reed

Did you see him?

Brocklehurst

No, they wouldn't let me this time.

Mrs. Reed

They! Where is he?

Brocklehurst

In jail. Arrested on the suit of "Patrick Oppenheimer" for twelve hundred pounds.

Mrs. Reed

Ah. (Sinking on sofa R) My cup of bitterness is full! What is to be done? What's to be done?

Brocklehurst

You must hasten the marriage of his Lordship with Georgiana. Why is it delayed so long?

Mrs. Reed

Some ulterior influence which I am unable to fathom.

Brocklehurst

I can.

Mrs. Reed

You?

Brocklehurst

Jane Eyre! That girl must be got rid of.

Mrs. Reed

But how?

Brocklehurst

You must tell her about her Uncle in the West Indies.

Mrs. Reed

What — confess to her what I have done?

Brocklehurst

There is no alternative. By the way, could you get me an invitation to dinner here? I am very hungry.

Mrs. Reed

I suppose I can. Come let us seek Georgiana. Oh for some way out of this tangle. (Exit L. followed by Brocklehurst) (Pause) (Enter

Jane R.U.E. followed by Rivers)



Rivers

So Jane, this is the only answer you can give me.

Jane

What other answer can I give. I shall never marry.

Rivers

Why not? You have a woman's heart.

Jane

Yes. I have a woman's heart, but not where you are concerned, for you I have only a comrade's constance, a fellow soldier's frankness, fidelity, fraternity - if you will. You have been always my friend, my dear good friend. I can never repay you sufficiently in gratitude the debt I owe you, but I could not give you my hand and wrong you by pretense of love, the counterfeit of sentiments I despise.

Rivers

( Struggling with himself) Tell me, Jane, is there someone else?

Jane

What do you mean?

Rivers

Someone else who has kindled the sparks of affection in your breast?

Jane

You have no right to ask me that.

Rivers

I have - I offer you honorable marriage -

Jane

I have told you already I shall never marry. (Pause) Are you answered? Are you satisfied?

Rivers

I am answered. I am not satisfied. (Rochester entering R.C. stops and listens) (Rivers in suppressed passion) Listen Jane, I have loved you these two years. My love is not a selfish one. I have never breathed a word of it till now, but you must have guessed my feelings. You have refused me. Well and good, I accept the consequence, but I shall still watch over you. I feel you are in danger, and I swear to you, I will not see you drift on the shores of destruction. I will save you in spite of yourself.

Jane

You speak in riddles.

Rivers

Which your woman's heart can solve.

Rochester

Pardon me, I don't want to be an eaves-dropper - I have heard, but little, but it appears that you two friends are in some trouble. Can I offer my services as mediator?

Rivers

I fear not, Lord Rochester. You could scarcely be an impartial one.

Theodore

(Enters hurriedly) Oh Doctor, you are here - come quickly. Your professional services are needed urgently. My fiancee Adele has met with an accident!

Omnes

Accident!

Theodore

Not serious though. She was showing me a dance her mamma used to





do and she fell and sprained her "accent" - I mean her ankle. Come quickly! (Drags Rivers off R) (Mrs. Reed, Brocklehurst, and Georgiana enter L.)

Mrs. Reed

Ah, here is Miss Eyre now. Your Lordship, I have something of importance to say to this young person, who doubtless has already informed you is a connection of my family.

Rochester

No, she never has - you amaze me - she is -

Mrs. Reed

My niece!

Rochester

A niece of yours. Bless me, I never should have suspected it. Well, well, well, I am called away, but will see you all at dinner. Pardon me. (Exits L.)

Brocklehurst

Dinner! (Smiles in anticipation) Now Miss Georgiana, we had better leave your mamma alone, and I will tell you about poor John! Just think in jail!

Georgiana

I hope they'll keep him there this time for the rest of his unnatural life. (Exits followed by Brocklehurst)

Jane

Well Aunt Reed! Why this interview? Why not have let things go as they were?

Mrs. Reed

Oh, don't misunderstand me. I'm not here to hold out the olive branch of peace to you. We neither of us have time to be hypocritical, we neither have need to practice deception.

Jane

No.

Mrs. Reed

We have - do still, and always shall hate one another to the end

Jane

You hate me and will always hate me, but you are wrong in supposing me equally implacable. I have changed.

Mrs. Reed

No, you are unchanged. You are still the same silent, determined creature you were. You can stand calmly and gaze at me - you have made a just and upright woman a criminal.

Jane

I made you a criminal?

Mrs. Reed

Yes, it is you, and you alone. Are you not rejoiced to hear that the rich Mrs. Reed is poor - almost penniless?

Jane

No, so far from rejoicing at your misfortunes - I pity you.

Mrs. Reed

I could not see my dear boy want, and it is expensive living in London. I spent on him themoney which your Uncle left in my charge to be expended on you.

Jane

He left money then!

Mrs. Reed

Yes, not according to forms of law, but directed on his death bed that I should use it for you. A sacred trust.





4-P.

Jane

Well, is that all?

Mrs. Reed

No, there is more. Do you know that you are rich?

Jane

Rich?

Mrs. Reed

You have a wealthy Uncle in the West Indies who wants to make you his heiress. He is your father's brother. He has sent letter after letter begging you to come to him.

Jane

And you held these letters back?

Mrs. Reed

Yes. I could not endure the thought of seeing you in affluence while my fortune was fast disappearing. I wrote to your Uncle that you were dead, had died of the fever while at Lowood School. Now Georgiana is about to marry Lord Rochester. I shall live here, so you had better take steps to seek out your Uncle in the Indies, as you realize, it will be impossible for you and I to breathe under the same roof.

James

(Enters L.) Please, Miss Eyre, there's an old gypsy woman who insists on seeing you. She wants to tell your fortune. She's just telling Miss Reed's and she spoke of you.

Mrs. Reed

Telling Georgiana's fortune? I'll have her put in the stocks.  
(Exit hurriedly L.)

Jane

Tell her, James, I have no faith.

James

She swears she won't leave without seeing you.

Jane

What is she like?

James

She's a shocking ugly old creature, Miss.

Jane

Well, tell her I can't see her.

James

Very well, Miss. (Exit L.)

Jane

And so dear Thornfield I must prepare to leave you. I must enter on a road of which I know nothing. No affection must be allowed when that unhappy day comes, not a glance is to be cast back, not even one forward. Not a thought must be given to the past or the future, the first a page so heavenly sweet, yet so deadly sad, the last an awful blank, like the world when the deluge has gone by.  
(exit R)

Rochester

(Enters, disguised as Gypsy hag. James follows snickering) Not here! Go find her. (Goes to arm chair L. seats himself) (James exits R) (Pause) (Jane re-enters with James who points at Rochester) (James exits L) So you not want your fortune told?

Jane

I don't care about it, mother. You can please yourself, but I warn you I have no faith.



Rochester

I know that. I heard it in your steps as you crossed the threshold.

Jane

Did you? You've a quick ear

Rochester

I have, and a quick eye and a quick brain.

Jane

You need them all in your trade.

Rochester

Yes, when I've customers like you to deal with. Why don't you tremble?

Jane

I'm not cold.

Rochester

Why don't you turn pale?

Jane

I'm not sick.

Rochester

Why don't you consult my art?

Jane

I'm not silly.

Rochester

(Laughs, produces pipe, lights it, begins to smoke) You are cold, are you sick? You are silly.

Jane

Prove it.

Rochester

I will. In a few words, you are cold because you are alone. No contact strikes from you the fire that is in you - you are sick because the best of feelings, the highest, the sweetest given to man keeps far away from you. You are silly - because suffer as you may, you will not beckon it to approach, nor will you stir one step to ~~meet~~ meet it, where it waits you. Let me see your palm.

Jane

Oh this is folly, but - (holds out her hand, Rochester looks at it - But) (He does not touch it, only looks)

Rochester

I can make nothing of such a hand as this, almost without a line. Destiny is not written there.

Jane

I believe that.

Rochester

But destiny is written in the eye, the forehead, mouth, the expression of the face. Kneel and lift up your head.

Jane

Now we are coming to reality. (Kneels) I shall begin to put some faith in you presently.

Rochester

I wonder what thoughts are busy in your heart when you are among all the fine people here in this old house. No sympathy between you - they pass before you like shadows - and you - you are sad, then, eh?

Jane

No bored often, sleepily sometimes, never sad.

Rochester

Then you have some secret to buoy you up and please you with whispers of the future.



=6=F.

Jane

None.

Rochester

One figure you follow with curiosity, maybe two - the beautiful Miss Georgiana, perhaps your ugly master.

Jane

I came here to listen to my own future - not the fate of others.

Rochester

Have n't you pictured them happily married?

Jane

No. Your witch's skill is at fault sometimes. Tell me my future.

Rochester

Your future is yet doubtful. It depends on yourself to reach out your hand and take it up. (Looks at her) The eye shines like dew, soft and full of feeling, it smiles to my jargon - where it ceases to smile it is sad, the eye is favorable, the mouth should speak much and smile often - that too is propitious. The brow - the brow speaks only conscience. I will not sell my soul to buy bliss. Well said. (in natural voice) Heaven knows I only wish to foster, not to blight - to earn gratitude, not to wring tears of blood. My harvest must be in smiles, in endearments. Oh I rave in exquisite delirium. Rise, Miss Eyre, the game's played out. (Bus. strips off disguise) Off ye sendings - Jane can you forgive me?

Jane

If I haven't been too absurd, I shall try to forgive you - but it wasn't right.

Rochester

Waxe, why did you never tell me Mrs. Reed was your Aunt.

Jane

I don't regard her as my Aunt, she only married my mother's brother.

Rochester

Um? Oh, I see, but Georgiana is your cousin.

Jane

I never think of that - no one would ever know or suspect the fact, and I -

Rochester

But blood is thicker than water.

Jane

I've heard so.

Rochester

You and she ought to be good friends. She's a lovely creature - she ought to make me a good wife, Jane, a strapper - a real strapper, Jane, a Juno of a woman. My men will be working at Thornfield soon, Jane - what with the Captain and Adele married and - with me and -

Jane

I wanted to speak to you about that, your Lordship. I shall have to get another situation.

Rochester

I shall get one for you, Jane. In a month I hope to be a happy bridegroom.

Jane

I shall advertise immediately. I suppose in the interim I may - I could find some place in the village to - (nearly breaking down)

Rochester

You must have in some degree become attached to this old place, Jane.





Jane

Indeed I am attached to it.

Rochester

When Adele is married - it may prove very dull here.

Jane

(Sighs) Ah!

Rochester

Why that sigh, Jane? Is it in a weary anticipation of the dullness of Thornfield - should you remain?

Jane

(Astonished) Should ~~you~~ I remain?

Rochester

Yes, you seem horrified at the prospect.

Jane

No, only amazed.

Rochester

And why?

Jane

But you are to be married.

Rochester

Yes, and very shortly too.

Jane

Well, my Lord, this will be no place for me when you are married.

Rochester

Perhaps you are right, but do you think of going to your Uncle in the West Indies? I understand you have an Uncle there. That will be a long journey, Jane.

Jane

Yes, it is a long way off.

Rochester

The broad ocean will then be between you and your native land.

Jane

True. (Moved)

Rochester

And between us also.

Jane

Aye, and between us.

Rochester

We shall know - nothing more of one another.

Jane

No, nothing.

Rochester

And shall never see one another again.

Jane

No, never - never. (Sobbing) I grieve to leave Thornfield. I love Thornfield. I love it because here I have led a full and delightful life, momentarily at least. I've not been tramped upon, I have not been buried with inferior minds. I don't want to - to - go away from - you. I can see the necessity of departure - but it is like looking on the necessity of death.

Rochester

Then why go at all - why not stay?

Jane

(Passionately) I tell you I must go! Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you. Do you think because I am obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!



I have as much soul as you and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with beauty and wealth, I would have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. Let me tell you Lord Rochester, it is my spirit that addresses your spirit! Just as if we had both passed through the grave and we stood at God's feet, equal, as we are!

Rochester

As we are! (Embracing her and kissing her) So - Jane.

Jane

Yes - six - and yet not so, for you are a married man, or as good as a married, and wed to one inferior to you - to one with whom you have no sympathy, one whom I do not believe you truly love - for I have seen and heard you sneer at her. I would scorn such a union, therefore I am better than you. Let me go!

Rochester

Where? Jane?

Jane

Anywhere. (Struggling)

Rochester

Jane, be still, don't struggle so, like a wild frantic bird that is but shedding its plumage in its wild struggle for freedom.

Jane

I am no bird and no net ensnares me. I am a free human being with an independent will which I now expect to leave you. (Breaks away)

Rochester

But Jane, I want you for my wife. You are the one being in this whole world to me. Jane, won't you marry me? (Pause) Do you doubt me Jane?

Jane

Entirely!

Rochester

You have no faith in me?

Jane

Not a whit.

Rochester

Am I a liar in your eyes? What love have I for this woman? None, and that you know. What love has she for me? None. I tested that. I contrived that a report should reach her that my boasted wealth was myth, that I was on the brink of ruin and the result was frapped frigidity from her and outright insolent condescension from that sweet old lady, her mother. Jane, I want you. Say yes, please - quickly.

Jane

Lord Rochester. (Pause) Let me look in your face.

Rochester

Why?

Jane

Because I want to read your countenance.

Rochester

You'll find it more legible than a crumpled page, Jane, don't torture me.

Jane

How can I do that if your offer be real. My only feelings must be gratitude and devotion.



Rochester

Gratitude. Oh Jane accept me quickly.

Jane

Do you sincerely wish me to become your wife?

Rochester

I swear it.

Jane

Then I will be your wife.

Rochester

Come to me then, dear little woman. Come to me entirely now - make my happiness. I will make you. (They embrace) (Rivers and Theodore enter)

Rivers

Pardon for interrupting so interesting a tête-à-tête, we will withdraw. (Adele enters, limping)

Rochester

No, remain. I esteem this the happiest moment of my life. (Mrs. Reed, Georgiana, and Brocklehurst enter,) Attention all - I present to you my affianced wife.

Mrs. Reed, Georgiana & Brocklehurst

Jane Eyre!

Theodore

My congratulations to you both.

Adele

Oh Mademoiselle, I am so happy. (Embraces Jane who has business with her and Theodore)

Rivers

(Suppressed) Lord Rochester, what does this mean?

Rochester

It means that I have her and will hold her.

Rivers

(Low suppressed) You and I both know this marriage is impossible.

Rochester

(Rapidly) Man, meddle not with me. I found her friendless, cold, comfortless. I'll cherish her, I'll guard her - I know my Maker sanctions what I do, for man's opinion - I defy it.

Servant

(Enters) Dinner is served.

Rochester

(Turns to Jane) Come Jane. (Offers his arm, she takes it) (They go up and off, followed by Adele and Theodore)

Mrs. Reed

(Impatiently) Well, Mr. Brocklehurst, give me your arm to dinner.

Brocklehurst

My dear madam, I really have no appetite. (Sits on arm chair) To think of it. Jane Eyre, Jane Eyre. (Mrs. Reed and Georgiana go off together, indignantly, leaving Brocklehurst all broken up in chair)

C U R T A I N





ACT IV.

Scene 1st.

Passage leading from vestry to church interior. Any dark Gothic interior drop would do. Drop hung about 1 1/2. Dark wings slightly obliqued to carry off. The only furniture heavy cushioned bench little R. of C.

At rise:- Mrs. Reed and Georgiana discovered.

Mrs. Reed

We are here to witness her discomfiture.

Georgiana

I shall take more pleasure to watching his rage. It will be grand. His eyes will blaze and he'll look like a Levantine pirate or Black Bothwell. I could almost love him when he gets that way.

Mrs. Reed

Georgiana.

Georgiana

Oh I have no use for a man unless he has a spice of the devil in him.

Brocklehurst

(Enters L. rubbing his hands) Victory, victory. Mr. Mason is arrived. He has handed over the attestation to Dr. Rivers. Ah, to-day the necks of the wicked and the vain glorious shall be bowed and the righteous shall prevail. (To Rivers and Mason who enter L.) Ah gentlemen, this is a happy day. Doctor, that was a lucky thought of mine, wasn't it, wasn't it?

Rivers

(Annoyed) Mr. Brocklehurst, this matter doesn't concern you in the least. This gentleman is here for the protection of his sister. I am here for the protection of Miss Eyre. Neither interest you, so kindly go attend to your own affairs. Mr. Mason, if you are nervous, go on into the church. I shall call you if you are needed. (Mason exits) (Rumble of carriage wheels heard off L.)

Georgiana

Ah, they are here. Now for the fun. (Pause) (Lohengrin march played) (Enter from R. Theodore, frock coat, wedding mch., etc)

Brocklehurst

Look at that poppinjay. (As Theodore crosses L.) (Pause) (Theodore meets Rochester, Jane and Adele as bridesmaids)

Theodore

Welcome. The arrangements are complete. The vicar and the clerk are already at the communion rails.

Rochester

Good. Come Jane, lean on me, from this hour dates our blissful union. (Bus. as they advance Rivers advances and checks them)

Rivers

Stop. Lord Rochester - this marriage will not take place.

Rochester

Stand aside.

Rivers

I will not. An insuperable impediment to this marriage exists, you have a wife now living.

Rochester

What is her name, her parentage, place of abode.

Rivers

I will read you this document. (Reads) "I affirm and can prove that on the 26th of October, A.D. 1858, Edward Fairfax Rochester,



of Thornfield Hall in Devonshire, England, was married to my sister, Bertha Antoinetta Mason, daughter of Jones Mason, merchant, and Antoinetta Mason, his wife, a creole, at San Anastasius Church, Spanish town, Jamaica, West Indies. The record of the marriage will be found on the register of that church, a copy of which is now in my possession. Signed, Richard Mason."

Rochester

This may be a trick of yours. Where is the writer of that document?

Rivers

I will produce him. (Goes R) Mr. Mason step here. (Pause)  
(Mason enters)

Rochester

You hound, spawn of a lunatic mother and degenerate father. Oh don't fear, I'll put my finger on you. I would as leave strike a woman. Enough, I'll tell all. It shall come out like a bullet from a barrel. Bigamy's an ugly word. I meant however to be a bigamist, but Fate has outmanoeuvred me. It's time the woman I married still lives. She is the mysterious lunatic up in Thornfield Tower. Bertha Mason is a mad woman, and she comes from a mad family of idiots and maniacs through three generations. Her mother the creole, was but a mad woman and a drunkard. I found that out after I had wed the daughter, for they were silent on family secrets before. All of you go now and take a good look at her purple face and bloated features - see her grovel on all fours, laugh like a hyena and judge whether she is human or beast. Go ye carrion crows, and gloat over the spectacle. Look at the red eye balls of the demon and compare them with the dear gaze of my bride who was to be, this girl standing by my side, and then judge me. Off with you. Go take your peep into the pit of hell. Leave me alone, alone with her who knew nothing, suspected nothing - my innocent Jane, and let me make my peace with her. (Goes up placing Jane who has half fainted on couch - characters all withdraw save Brocklehurst who finally is kicked out by Theodore, who exits after him)

Rochester

Well Jane, no word of reproach. (Pause) (Jane does not answer)  
I never meant to wound you so. If the man who had but one little ewe lamb that was dear to him as a daughter, and had by some mistake slaughtered it in the blood shambles, he could not have rued it more than I. Why don't you tell me, I am a scoundrel.

Jane

I cannot. I am tired and sick.

Rochester

We will go away from the stone hell of Thornfield with its insane fiend. You are to be Mrs. Rochester both virtually and nominally. I shall keep only to you so long as you and I live. We shall go to a place I have in the South of France, villa on the shores of the Mediterranean. There you shall live happy ~~and~~ guarded and most innocent life. Don't fear that I will wish to make you my mistress.

Jane

If I went with you as you say, what would I be. Your wife is living - (With sudden burst of tears) God help me! God help me!



Rochester

Listen to me Jane, as quietly and calmly as you can. I was the second son of my father who sought to provide for my future by a wealthy marriage. When I left college I was packed off to the West Indies to espouse a bride already courted for me. She is that gibbering, loathsome maniac confined in that stone room in Thornfield Tower. Her mother died in the lunatic asylum, her brother is now a dumb idiot. Insanity runs riot in the family. All these facts I learned after the marriage. For four years I lived with this Bertha Mason and dragged through all the hideous and degrading agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife at once intemperate and unchaste. My elder brother died and my father also. I was Lord Rochester, rich, but tied by law and society to this woman, and unable to free myself by legal means, for the doctors discovered that my wife was mad. Her vices, her excesses, had developed the germ of insanity. That is our boasted English law.

Jane

What did you do when you found out that she was mad?

Rochester

I tried suicide but I failed. Then hope came to me. I chartered a vessel and conveyed her to England and secretly brought her to Thornfield Tower, where she has now been for ten years. She has made her room a wild beasts den, a goblin's cell - Rivers the Surgeon, and Grace Poole are the only two I have ever admitted to my confidence.

Jane

Then what did you do?

Rochester

Like the will o' the wisp flitted all over the world, finally came back to Thornfield and met you. Oh I tried dissipation until I found you. I recognized your honesty, your truth - I said here is my good angel. I loved her, she is the one woman in all this world to me. It is because I knew and felt this that I resolved to marry you. To tell me that I had already a wife is empty mockery, you know now that I had but a hideous demon. But I should have held nothing back. Our love would have been one of the holiest in the sight of God. His smile would have blessed our union, forbidden by the laws of man. I should have asked to accept my pledge and have you give me yours. Jane, give it to me now. (Pause) Why are you silent, Jane? (Long Pause) (Business) (Jane stands tremblingly irresolute, showing the struggle raging within. Rochester attempts to take her hands, she gently evades him) Jane, you understand what I want of you, just this promise, I will be yours Edward. (Long pause) (Gently) Do you mean to go one way in the world and let me go another?

Jane

I do.

Rochester

(Embracing her) Do you mean it now.

Jane

I do.

Rochester

(Softly) (Kissing her forehead) And now.

Jane

(Freeing herself rapidly) I do.





Rochester

Oh Jane, this is bitter. It would not be wicked to love me.

Jane

It would be to obey you.

Rochester

In mercy, don't don't - what am I to do?

Jane

Do as I do. (Leaning on bench for support) Trust in God and your self. Let us hope that we may meet in Heaven.

Rochester

Oh you condemn me to live wretched and die ~~xxx~~ accursed.

Jane

I advise that we both shall live sinless.

Rochester

(In agony) Jane, you tear love and innocence from me. You fling me back on lust for a passion, vice for an occupation.

Jane

I no more assign this fate to you than grasp at it for myself.

Rochester

Is it better to transgress a mere human law or to drive your fellow creature, whom you love, to misery, to despair - you are alone in this world, no kith, no kin to offend, no friends only yourself.

Jane

(Pause) I care for myself. I will respect myself. Do you think my body and soul don't rise up in meeting against the religion of that law made by God, sanctioned by man - that is because I am mad my veins are running fire, my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs, but I have been sane - then I received the law. That law was made for moments of temptations, moments like this, that law is all I have at this hour to stand by - there I plant my foot. (Pause, bus) (Rochester goes to her, seizes her wrist, clasps her waist. He is trembling with passion, she raises her eyes to him, sighs exhaustedly, he holds her a moment)

Rochester

(Releases her) (Sobs) Come Jane, come. (Pause) (Bus) (Jane falteringly moves away) You are going Jane, you are leaving me.

Jane

Yes.

Rochester

(Turns away) Jane - my hope - my love - my life! (Tries to control his convulsive sobs of a strong man in agony)

Jane

(Who has almost reached the entrance, walks back, kneels to him) (Kisses his hand) God bless you my dear master, God keep you from harm and wrong, direct you, solace you, and reward you for your past kindness to me.

Rochester

Jane's love would have been my best reward without it my heart is broken. (Falls on bench, she rises, stands by him, smooths his hair, kisses his cheek) (He rises, holds out his arms, but she evades his embrace and exits L.) (Pause) (Rochester has business of arising suddenly as out of a trance) Why - why do I let her go? I'll follow her and yet the resolute, wild, free soul looking out of her eyes defies me with more than courage, with stern triumph. Ah, it is your spirit, with will and energy and virtues and purity that I want and not your brittle frame. Of your -



self you could come, and with soft plight nestle against my heart if you would - seized against your will you will elude the grasp like an essence, vanish ere I inhale your essence. (Hurry music) (Murmurs outside) (Alarm bell heard sounding)

Theodore

(Enters) Lord Rochester, Thornfield Tower is in flames.

Rochester

In flames! Let it burn - let it burn.

Theodore

Man, are you mad? Wake from your trance. That desperate maniac eluding the vigilance of her keeper, Grace Poole, has fired the North Tower. There she stands on the battlements with fiendish screams, fighting with tooth and nails all who attempt to save her. What's to be done?

Rochester

Let her perish. It is fitting. The devil will have his own.

Theodore

Lord Rochester - this from you? Then be it your task to call off for their own sakes her would be rescuers before it is too late.

Rochester

(Realizing) Lives periled - and for her? No, no, thank you Theodore - you've recalled me to myself. ~~It is~~ My duty is before me. I will save her if I can. I am Lord Rochester. No man shall risk his life but the master.

## CHANGE OF SCENE.

Scene 2nd.

Full stage represents the fire in Thornfield Tower.

Landscape drop for backing

3rd Story

2nd Story

To give idea of height and distance across the stage about 1 1/2 runs a stone set piece five feet high supposed to represent 2nd story of castle. Behind this about 3 another set piece about 12 feet high with tower on R. platform behind this. Wood wings to mask on both sides. These set pieces painted old stone with ivy, old fashioned windows through which flames are seen, plenty of smoke and all the usual fire effects; try to get roar of flames, etc., etc. Wind machine. Wood crash. Shouts outside, bell ringing. "Don't go my master, Lord Rochester" etc., etc. As the scene changes Maniac woman seen on top of Tower R. at back waving her arms, screaming and laughing. Rochester is seen toiling along from L. he is coatless. He fights his way through the



smoke and flames, calling:-)

Rochester

Bertha! Bertha! (The mad as sees him, screams and jumps from tower  
off R. counterweighted of course) (Rochester reaches the top). G  
Gone! Gone! Crushed dead, dead on the stones below. (Move  
flames, etc. Noise = voices, etc.)

C U R T A I N<sub>a</sub>  
u u u u u u u





A C T V.

Three months later.

Ferndean, a cottage on the Rochester estate.

Landscape backing



Landscape backing. Hedge row, opening R. of C. (1) Set house on steps R. (2) Tree with seat surrounding it L.C. (3) Door of house. (4) Table and two chairs. Wooded Wings. Balise grass mats, small table with pitcher and glasses R.C. Chairs. Time: Late afternoon.

At rises Theodore enters with Rivers from house.

Theodore

Poor old chap, it hurts my conscience to look at him.

Rivers

Why?

Theodore

If it had not been for me he would never have imperiled his life so uselessly, so vainly as it proved, on that unfortunate day, when the wedding was interrupted and Jane left him, he was dazed. I recalled him to his duty as I saw it, to the instincts of our race and blood as we Englishmen feel it, and the result is, Lord Rochester the proud, the strong, the stalwart is now blind and crippled. His athletic strength is quelled and his vigorous prime blighted. Doctor, you acted for the best, but old fellow, I wish you had arrived an hour later than you did for his sake and for Jane's.

Rivers

I had my duty also to perform.

Theodore

Yes, we both did what we thought was right. Do you think there is any hope that he will recover his sight?

Rivers

Yes, of one of his eyes, but the tempest raging within delays recovery.

Theodore

I can see in his countenance a desperate and brooding look, like some wild beast or bird fettered and held captive. The caged eagle whose gold ringed eyes cruelty has extinguished might look as does that sightless Samson.

Rivers

There is but one being in this world who can speed his recovery.



Theodore

Jane: only Jane = I know it.

Rivers

She has been a devoted nurse, moving like a dumb servant about the place, tireless, watchful. I rejoiced on her absolute silence for fear the knowledge of her presence might excite him, but the time has come for her to speak to him.

Theodore

But Jane now is rich, the death of her Uncle has left her a wealthy woman = she is young, bright, clever = her wealth will have a score of suitors for her hand.

Rivers

She will refuse them all. You do not know her as I do. Her heart is centered there. (Points to cottage) I shall break the seal of silence I have imposed on her, to-day, I shall see her now. (Business, he pauses as if struggling with himself, then exits into cottage)

Adele

(Curses) nI will have nozing to say to you, detestable allez, allez. Go away from me. You shall not see Mademoiselle Jeanie. She shall not be "boysaired" wiz you. (Enters excitedly R.U.E.) Ah Theodore. Theodore, oh Theodore, drive away zat scelerat. (Profligate) Zat villian now. (Rushes into Theodore's arms)

Theodore

Calm yourself ma petite Adele. (Brocklehurst enters very much disheveled = his hat broken in, clothes dusty, looking very disreputable) Oh, it's you is it? Drinking again? I always suspected it. Now I know it.

Brocklehurst

Captain, you see before you the bearer of bad news.

Theodore

I believe it. I always associated your presence with something unpleasant.

Brocklehurst

But my presence to-day has nothing to do with you.

Theodore

Then what the devil are you bothering me for, and frightening my wife.

Brocklehurst

Don't lose your temper Captain. Remember you kicked me once, but I did not deserve it.

Theodore

But if I kick you again you will deserve it.

Adele

Kick him again. Now Theodore, oh kick him again = just once for me.

Theodore

Certainly my darling. (Chases Brocklehurst who runs from him around the tree)

Adele

Now, now, spare him Theodore, he is a coward.

Brocklehurst

She's right, I'm only brave morally, that is all. Your wife with her imperfect knowledge and her bad English misunderstood me

Theodore

Do you hear Adele, he says your English is bad.



Adele

Ah, perhaps he bezzet be "keeked" after all.

Brocklehurst

No, no pardon me madame, I meant - I only asked her to help me to an interview with Miss Eyre.

Theodora

And what can you want with Miss Eyre?

Brocklehurst

What can I want with Miss Eyre? Why Capt. Grey, I am the mentor of her youth - the valued guide of later years. I would now fain be her trusted counsellor and adviser as to the disposition of the wealth I understood she has lately acquired.

Theodore

That's very kind of you, but really, I don't think she wants to see you.

Brocklehurst

She will welcome me with open arms. I bring her the worst of news

Theodore

You have a strange idea of what will make you welcome, Brocky.

Brocklehurst

Her ~~22~~ cousin John has committed suicide.

Theodore

She knows that.

Brocklehurst

Knows it? How-

Theodore

I told her-

Brocklehurst

You-

Theodore

Yes, don't think that you are the only old woman in Devonshire. I'm a bit of a gossip myself, eh, Adele?

Adele

An angel. (Embracing him)

Theodore

Since I have been a married man, we've talk of everything over our cup of tea, don't we Adele?

Adele

All, mon Emperor. (Bus as before)

Brocklehurst

Does she know her Aunt Reed died of grief?

Theodore

Yes, she knows that too. You see Brocky, you are decidedly superfluous.

Brocklehurst

(Desperately) Does she know that I want to borrow some money of her.

Theodore

Ah, surprised - now I understand what you mean by bad news. No, I don't think that she knows that.

Brocklehurst

There's a warrant out for my arrest.

Theodore

That's good news.

Brocklehurst

Officers are out on my track.





Theodore

Better and better.

Brocklehurst

They haven't caught me yet.

Theodore

Worse and worse. Adele, go into the house.

Brocklehurst

And tell Miss Eyre-

Theodore

Brocky, I must insist that you do not address Mrs. Captain Grey without my permission. Adele, not a word of what you have heard.

Adele

(No assent) Au revoir, "mon hero" (Exits into house)

Theodore

Now Brocklehurst, by all that is holy, tell me, what claim have you on Miss Eyre. She whom you abused and plotted from childhood to womanhood - come out with it man, display your logic.

Brocklehurst

The scriptures teaches us we should forgive our enemies.

Theodore

None of your hypocritical cant. Now I haven't patience with it. Instance me one friendly act of yours toward Jane Eyre.

Brocklehurst

It was through my discovery that the ceremony was broken off.

Theodore

Oh it was!

Brocklehurst

Yes, I learned of the name of Lord Rochester's mysterious visitor. I smelt a rat - bribed the coachman who conveyed him to Milcote. When Jane Eyre's engagement was announced I traced Mr. Mason to London, told him of the news, learned that Lord Rochester was married to his sister.

Theodore

And played the devil generally, and your motive was for Jane Eyre's benefit.

Brocklehurst

Why scan motives, results are what I am after.

Theodore

What is your present crime.

Brocklehurst

I am accused of the conversion of fund belonging to the institution of Lowood. I loaned Mrs. Reed the greater portion of the money, hoping to realize one hundred per cent when Georgiana married Lord Rochester. I think that Jane Eyre ought to fix this matter up. (Detective enters, stands watching L.U.E. Brocklehurst a moment, comes down) Because if she don't, and I'm arrested, I will be in - (Detective snaps handcuffs on him) a most humiliating position. (Detective takes him by collar and walks him off) (Brocklehurst continues talking as they exit) That's all right, sir, I am a peaceful man, I'll give you no trouble. If I could see Miss Eyre, etc., etc. (His voice dies away in the distance) (Theodore goes up C. watching them) (Pause) (Enter from the house, Jane and Rivers)

Jane

Then you think it will be best.



5-P.

Rivers

Yes, the sound of your voice, the sense of your presence will do more good than a thousand doctors. Adele is leading him out here then you take her place. God bless you Jane and bring you all your heart's desire.

Jane

God bless you Ernest, my more than brother. (Holds out her hand) (Music "You may break you my shelter" etc) (Rivers stirred with emotion, bends over her hand mutely, kisses it, returns to door of house, lays finger on lips in warning gesture) (Music) - (Enter Rochester blind, led by Adele, he is hatless, he carries one arm in breast of coat, it is supposed to be mutilated) (Reds on lights)

Age 16

Come Monsieur, I will place you under the tree. The sun is almost set, it will soon be night. (Rivers exits into house)

Rochester

It is always night now, and will be forever more. Adele, give me some water. (Adele does so) (He drinks) Where is that dumb nurse.

Adele

I will find her. (Goes up to Theodore) (Bus) (They exult) (Pause)

Jane

Will you have a little more water, your Lordship.

Rochester

Ah, who is it? What is it? Who speaks? What delusion has come over me. What sweet madness has seized me.

Jane

No delusion. No madness. Your mind is too strong for delusion.

Rochester

(Reaching out) Where is the speaker? Is it only a voice? I cannot see, but I must feel or my heart will stop and my brain burst. (Jane takes his hand in both of hers) Her very fingers, her small slight fingers, if so, there must be more of her. (He gropes around, touching her neck, shoulders, waist, finally draws her to him) Is it Jane? This is her size.

Ja ne

And this, her voice. She's all here, her heart too. God bless  
you, I'm glad I am here.

Rochester

Jane Eyre. In truth, my living Jane!

Jane

You hold me fast enough. I'm not cold like a corpse nor vacant like air am I?

Rochester

My living darling, but I cannot be blessed after all my misery, you are sure you are not a dream come to mock me? I feared you might be <sup>an</sup> opening outcast among strangers.

Jane

No, I'm an independent rich woman now. My Uncle in the West Indies left me his entire fortune.

Rochester

You were always independent Jane, but I am sorry to hear that you are ~~a~~ rich.

Jane

Are you indeed — and why?



-6-P-

Rochester

Because if you were poor, Jane, you might make up your mind to stay around me and be my kind little nurse, but then as you are

young and rich, and as I ought to look after your interests, I suppose I should entertain none but fatherly feelings for you. Now I feel it my duty to advise you to - to -

Jane

To what-

Rochester

To go and marry some handsome young man.

Jane

I don't care about being married.

Rochester

You should care Jane, if I were what I once was, I'd make you care but a sightless block - I suppose I am very hideous Jane.

Jane

Very sir. You always were you know.

Rochester

You haven't lost your wickedness Jane wherever you have been. Ah my sacred vision, my crippled strength. (Jane kisses him) I am no better than the old oak ~~was~~ struck by lightning that night you saved my life, Jane, and what right would that ruin have to bid a budding wood-bine to cover its decay with freshness.

Jane

You are no ruin, sir, no lightning struck oak. You are green and vigorous. You'll never want for friends.

Rochester

Friends, Jane, I want a wife.

Jane

Do you?

Rochester

Yes, is it news to you?

Jane

Of course - you said nothing of it before.

Rochester

Is it unwelcome news.

Jane

That depends on circumstances - on your choice.

Rochester

Make it for me, Jane, I will abide your decision.

Jane

Choose then, sir - who loves you the best.

Rochester

I will at least choose her I love best. Jane, will you marry me?

Jane

Yes, Edward.

Rochester

A poor blind man whom you will have to lead around by the hand.

Jane

Yes.

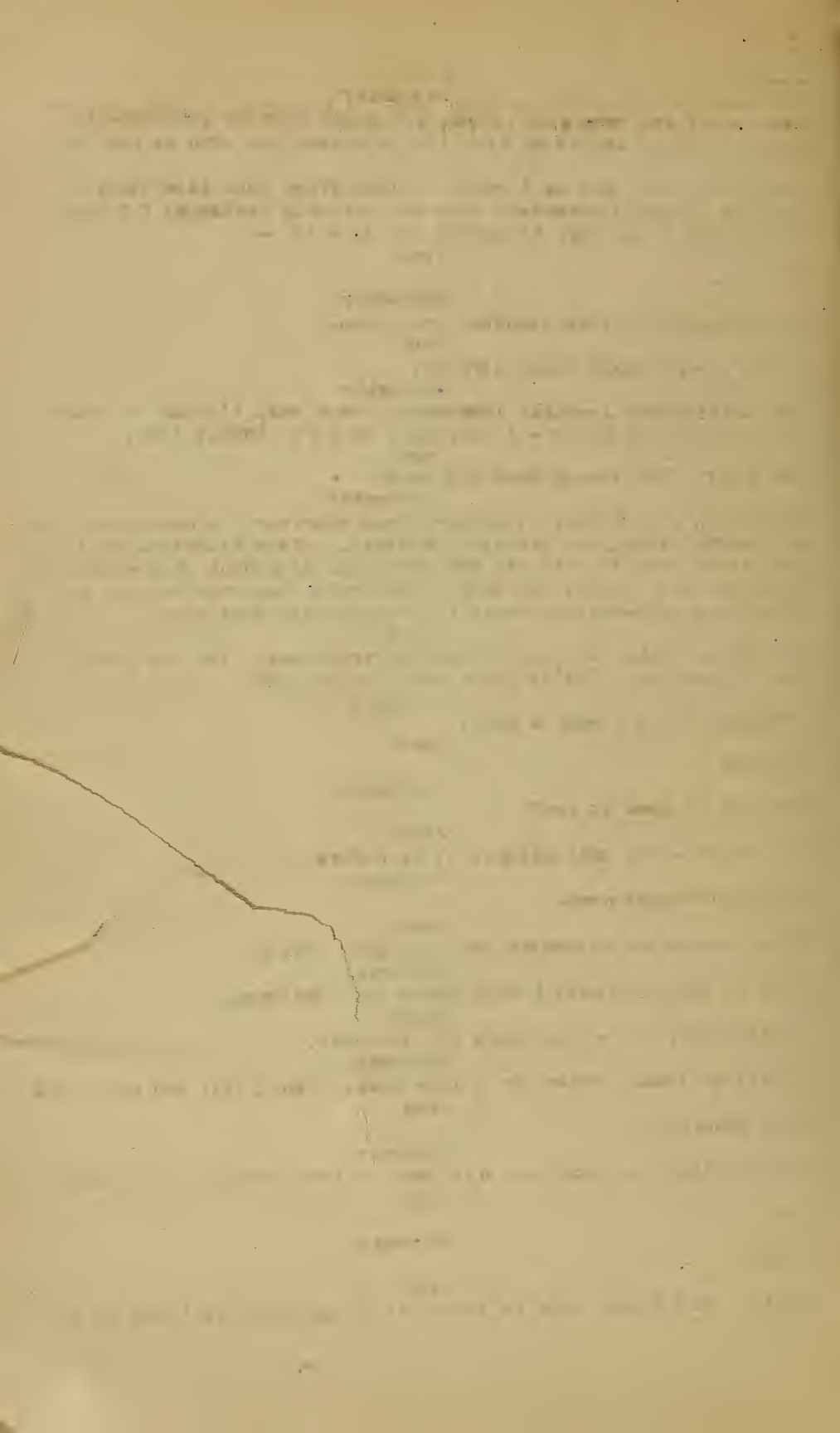
Rochester

Truly.

Jane

Truly. To be your wife is for me to be as happy as I can be on earth.





Rochester

(Kisses her) I thank my Maker that in the midst of judgment He  
has remembered mercy. P I C T U R E.

C U R T A I N.

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